

## ARRA and the Opportunity to Sell Your Services or Products

### The Opportunity

ARRA offers funds which offer additional opportunities for Vermont businesses. Those opportunities exist with regard to the ability to sell to:

- Federal Government
- State Government
- Local/ Regional Government
- Other companies or organizations that have received funds and who now seek to purchase goods and/or services

There is help available if you wish to examine and even pursue the above opportunities. The Vermont Procurement Technical Assistance Center (VTPTAC) can offer you such assistance, free of charge. VTPTAC helps Vermont companies to find contracting and subcontracting opportunities and then helps them through the process of becoming successful contractors.

More information about the program can be found at

<http://economicdevelopment.vermont.gov/vtptac> On that site, you can read about the program and you can sign up for counseling.

Please also remember, in all the above categories, there are plenty of opportunities beyond ARRA. The VTPTAC will help you with a long term strategy that examines what ARRA has to offer, but also provides looks beyond ARRA.

### Federal Contracting

If, out of the above opportunities, you chose to pursue federal contracting, there are requirements that you need to meet, the most significant of which are:

- Register in CCR. This can be found at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). This does require that you receive a DUNS number first. That number can be obtained at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;sessionId=09E21D5BA36F5B5E4094B5BC31F88BE9>
- If you qualify as a small business or any other special class of small business, make sure that you identify yourself as such in the registration. If those special classes require additional certification, pursue the steps necessary to obtain that certification. There are competitive advantages that will be missed if you do not identify yourself as such.
- If you are a small businesses, enter you company information into the SBA Database, which is accessed from the CCR site.
- If you in a position to begin submitting responses to federal government solicitations, you will, more likely than not, be required to have a current On Line Representations and Certifications record, known as ORCA. That can be accessed at <https://orca.bpn.gov>
- You should analyze how your federal government purchasers purchase what you have to offer. If opportunities are commonly is posted on electronic bid boards such as FebBizOpss, you really should avail yourself of the free electronic bid board search engine that the VTPTAC offers its clients for free. If opportunities are not found on the electronic bid board, it may be that the purchases come through other vehicles such as GSA Schedules or DoD EMall. If so, you will need to do what is necessary to enroll in those programs.

- There may be additional registrations and procedures to follow to do business with a specific agency.

## Questions and Answers

### **Is my business ready to become a federal contractor?**

Although there are some limited exceptions, the federal government generally will not do business with start-up companies. Generally, a company should have been in business, with active customers, for at least two years. The reason for this requirement is that government is using public funds and it must have assurances that the work ordered must be delivered by a competent contractor.

### **How do I win federal work?**

It is most important that you show you are responsive and responsible with regard to a need that the federal government has. Responsive means that you offer to provide exactly what the government seeks, nothing more and nothing less. Responsible means that you can show that you are a business that is responsible and which can financially and physically perform what is required.

It also goes without saying that you are competitive as well, as the federal government will buy from the business that offers the best value among those competing for the job.

### **If I am not ready to be a federal contractor, what can I do?**

There is as much, if not more opportunity to work as a subcontractor (work for a contractor that holds a government contract) or as a contractor to state or local government. Often, the requirements are less stringent.

### **Does ARRA contain any special requirements for contractors?**

Generally speaking, there really are not significant changes in the requirements to be federal contractors for opportunities using ARRA funds.

However, please be aware that if you are going to be a contractor to one of the fund recipients such as a local community non-profit, local government, etc., there may be additional requirements that you will encounter that you have never experienced before as a contractor to those organizations. Please note that the following may apply to these state, local, and regional projects:

- Davis Bacon – This is a requirement that contractors pay prevailing wages.
- Buy America – This requires domestic content in materials and supplies, as opposed to materials and supplies for foreign sources.
- Other requirements, such as job creation/jobs saved reporting, may apply as well and it therefore important that any contractor carefully read their solicitations with regard to requirements that may never have been encountered before.

### Assistance with all of the above

With regard to all the above, the VTPTAC can offer assistance.

<http://economicdevelopment.vermont.gov/vtptac>